A

SERMON

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AT THE FUNERAL

OF THE

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SERMON

ISAIAH III: 1, 2.

For behold the Lord of Hosts doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah . . . . . the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient.

This prophetic declaration has respect to the terrible calamities which were ere long to overtake the Jewish nation, as a punishment for their manifold iniquities, especially their abominable idolatry. They had forgotten the Lord of Hosts; and He would bring Himself to their remembrance by tokens of his righteous displeasure. And among other evils which He would inflict, would be the removal of those who had constituted emphatically the "stay and staff" of the nation; and in the list of the useful and honourable who were to be taken away, were those enumerated in our text—"the prophet, the prudent and the

ancient." However these words may have been intended originally to designate different characters, they obviously admit of being applied to the same character—the whole may be considered as descriptive of a prophet, venerable for his years and eminent for his wisdom.

A prophet was an extraordinary messenger, directly and supernaturally empowered by God, to reveal his secret will in respect to the future, either to individuals or the church at large. In this strict sense the prophetical office never existed apart from a miraculous dispensation; but as the ministers of the gospel are the true successors of the prophets, in respect to a part of their office,—namely, in declaring the will of God since it has been revealed,—so we are accustomed, using the word in a large sense, to *call* them prophets; and this seems to be justified by the Apostle, when he speaks of ordinary preaching under the name of *prophesying*—"He that prophesieth, speaketh unto men for edification and exhortation and comfort."

Regarding the text then in a slightly accommodated sense, let me direct your

thoughts, for a few moments, to *the providence of God as concerned in the removal of aged and distinguished ministers.*

Let it not be said that I magnify mine office above measure, when I assert that the Christian ministry is the most important agency that has ever been established among men. It originated with the Son of God Himself; and bears the stamp of his own mediatorial authority. He has pledged Himself for its success and its perpetuity; having identified with it both the workings of his grace and the accomplishment of his purposes. The ends which it contemplates are vast, beneficent, glorious, beyond our conceptions—nothing less than the spreading of the gospel "far as the curse is found;" the healing of all man's moral maladies, and the complete renovation and exaltation of his nature; and finally, the most perfect illustration of the divine character in connection with the Mediator's universal reign. The office of a Christian minister may, indeed, in the view of the world, be a light thing, and it may utterly disappear in the splendour of great civil or military achievements; but, rely on it, God accounts it the

noblest office on earth; and the day will come when those who affect now to despise it, will be constrained to recognize in it a mighty engine of divine power. True, it is held by a weak, unworthy, partially sanctified mortal; but God had his own reasons for committing the treasure to an earthen vessel. There is no minister occupying so exalted a station, but he has reason to humble himself on account of his own unworthiness; and none occupying so humble a station, but he may feel honoured and exalted in the reflection that he is acting as God's ambassador and doing God's work.

But while great importance and responsibility attach essentially to the ministerial office, irrespective of the particular qualifications of those who hold it, some ministers are greatly distinguished above others in regard to intellectual powers and attainments. The word *prudent* in our text may denote one who is eminent in this respect; especially one who is eminent in that quality which we call *wisdom*. There are those in the ministry who, beside being truly godly men, are emphatically mighty men;—men whose minds, naturally

capacious and comprehensive, have been subjected to the most careful culture and the most rigid discipline; men capable of accurate discrimination and profound research; men who have an almost intuitive knowledge of other men's characters, and a sort of prophetic insight into the future; who are fit to take the lead in great enterprises, and can make their influence felt far and wide, no matter what may be done to restrain or neutralize it. When such a minister arises, he becomes at once a man of mark—his brethren in the ministry, the church, the world, all acknowledge his superiority. He may be a modest man—he may even be doubtful of his ability to occupy the field into which Providence introduces him; but there is little danger that he will be unknown or unhonoured. The light of his mind will dart abroad just as certainly as the light of Heaven; and not improbably there may come back to him from the ends of the earth the blessings of those to whom he has been a benefactor.

The exhausting labours and anxieties of the ministry are not favourable to long life; but, independently of this circumstance, we should

expect that but a small part of the whole number who are devoted to this work, would attain to old age—and so we actually find it. There is only here and there one to be found, in the ranks of Christ's ministers, who may properly be called, in the language of our text, an "ancient;" and the "prudent" and the "ancient" sometimes meet in the same individual. Yonder is a man richly endowed, highly cultivated, extensively useful, who has been constantly gathering wisdom through the long period of three score and ten or four score years; and even the gray hairs and wrinkles that you see upon him, scarcely betoken the waning of his higher faculties. He remembers much which those around him never knew. His experience is a volume abounding with the most instructive lessons upon human life. The little children allured by his gentle and loving manner, come up and hang upon his knees, while he reciprocates their simple greetings and gives them his blessing. Perhaps his voice may not now be heard as it once was, in publicly discussing great questions of church polity, or in urging the claims of benevolent institutions, or in

stilling the waves of popular excitement; but you may go to him with perplexed questions, and he will show himself adequate to solve them still; and peradventure, when God's holy day returns, you may find him at his post, dispensing the great truths of the gospel with a vigour and unction that would not have dishonoured his best days. Is not such a minister pre-eminently entitled to the gratitude and reverence of the community in which he dwells?

But no matter to what point his life may be lengthened out, he bows to the unchanging ordinance of God, and dies at last. He who framed and put in motion the wonderful mechanism on which life depends, has fixed a bound to his earthly existence which he can not pass; and when he reaches that, the Lord of Hosts takes him away. And what are some of the duties which devolve upon the living, in view of such a dispensation?

The first which I shall mention, is to acknowledge reverently the agency of God, in bringing such a life to a close. We are too apt to lose sight of God's hand in the regularity of its movements. Because day and

night, summer and winter, seed time and harvest, return upon us with unvarying uniformity, we find it difficult to realize that the heavenly bodies on whose action these changes depend, are only God's servants, moving in exact obedience to his will. Because the diseases which men suffer can frequently be traced to natural causes, we are little inclined to look beyond those causes, and we often practically admit the delusion that they originated and disposed themselves. And so too, when we see God's servant, venerable for age and wisdom, going down to the grave, we naturally look upon his decline and his departure as something inevitable: it is no cause for marvel that he dies now—the only wonder is that he did not die sooner. But Christian faith frowns upon these illusions of sense, and sees the hand of God in that lingering process of decay, and finally in the extinction of the vital principle, just as truly as in the original formation of man out of the dust of the earth. There is sovereignty in that dispensation where all seems so accidental—in the operation of those second causes there is an infinite mind working out its own infinite plan. That

patriarch minister has performed the work which was allotted to him; and now He, whose servant he is, has removed him to a higher sphere, and He has done it at the time and in the manner which his own unerring wisdom dictated.

In the next place, it is suitable that survivors should gratefully acknowledge the goodness of God in continuing such an one so long among the living. When he set out on the journey of life, no one could predict at what point the journey would terminate; but according to the best ascertained principles of calculation, the probability was that he would not live to grow old. He was introduced into a world where human life is always insecure; where death is ever busy, and often does his work suddenly and stealthily; where disease takes on a thousand forms, and accident sometimes outstrips disease in the rapidity of its fatal operations. And those who started with him—how they have fallen by his side! How he walks over the dust of his cotemporaries! How he stands as the venerable representative of three generations! But during the whole of the active period of this long life,

that gifted, accomplished, sanctified mind, has been tasking its energies to the utmost for the well being of the human family. The pulpit has been his throne; and from it has proceeded the broadest and deepest current of influence which he has sent forth; and this may have entered into a thousand minds, making way for that higher influence that brings light and peace and salvation. And much good service he may have performed in other ways;—perhaps by a vigorous co-operation with other leading minds in reforming the abuses and elevating the morals of society; perhaps in giving a safe and successful direction to some noble Christian enterprise connected immediately with the world's regeneration; perhaps in forming the minds and characters of a multitude of youth, into whose hands the great interests of civil and religious society are soon to be resigned. Shall not then the closing of such a career, the extinction of such a light, suggest to us the duty of thanksgiving? Shall we not gratefully ask, who but God kept that great mind vigorously and constantly employed for the world's benefit, until we saw before us a

very patriarch, making ready to put on immortality?

And finally, when such a benefactor of the world is taken away, those who have known him, especially those who have enjoyed the immediate benefit of his labours, should render due honour to his memory. I do not mean that honour which is expressed by a mere formal attendance on his funeral solemnities; nor yet that which exhausts itself in a lofty eulogium, or a splendid pageant, or a towering monument; but I mean an intelligent and hearty tribute to his extraordinary worth and usefulness—a deep sense of the loss which the community has sustained in his removal, manifested by appropriate expressions of reverential sorrow. And I mean yet more than this—the very highest tribute that we *can* pay to him is to seek to perpetuate his usefulness by giving to his teachings and example a permanent home in our memories and hearts, and endeavouring to secure to them an enduring influence over our fellow men. If to do good was the great object for which the venerable man lived, can we doubt that the most wel-

come tidings that could reach him in his blest abode, would be that the good which he has done not only is not lost, but is constantly working out still more glorious results, in the progressive renovation of the world. When our remembrances of him make us better and holier; when they strengthen our faith and quicken our zeal, and stimulate us to improve our own hearts and benefit our fellow men, then may we be sure that we act in accordance with his wishes, even as a glorified immortal; that we are worthily contributing to keep alive his memory on earth, while his spirit rejoices in Heaven.

Is it not due to ourselves that, when the Lord of Hosts takes away such an one, we should testify our reverence for his memory—for in so doing we open a new channel of blessing to our hearts; and in the act of embalming his virtues, there comes a genial warmth, an increased vigour, to our own. Is it not due to our fellow men—for the praise that we render to departed worth is a testimony in honour of truth and virtue, adapted to recommend these qualities to the world. Is it not due to the individual who is the subject

of our praise—for death does not abate the value of high intellectual and moral excellence; and he who has exhibited it while living, has lost none of his claims to grateful remembrance by going to his grave. And finally, and above all, is it not due to the Father of spirits—to Him who made that noble mind what it was, and gave it its right direction, and fixed it in its appropriate sphere, and recalled it to Himself, after it had accomplished a glorious work? Truly, my brethren, there are manifold claims upon us to mourn for the aged and honoured servant of God. When "the Lord of Hosts, doth take away the prophet, the prudent, the ancient," they do well who resolve to hold his virtues in honourable and enduring remembrance.

The occasion that has assembled us is associated with the departure of one to whom the prophetical description in our text may be applied with no doubtful propriety. He was a "prophet"—he was set apart in early life to proclaim the doctrine of salvation to his fellow men. He was a "prudent" man; both in the large sense of being intellectual and accomplished, and in the more restricted sense

of being cautious and far-seeing. He was an "ancient;" for however little the frost of age had touched his faculties, he had filled up several years more than three-quarters of a century. But though he has been spared so long, Heaven has at length claimed him; and here, where he has spoken to you so often, he has stopped, dressed in his grave clothes, to deliver his last message. I shall only meet a reasonable expectation in presenting you now with some brief notices of his life and character.

Dr. Bates was born at Cohasset, in this State, on the 20th of March, 1776—a date in reference to which he used to say that he was born a subject of George the Third, and was three months older than our National Independence. His early years he spent at home, labouring upon his father's farm; but even in childhood he began to develope a remarkable fondness for books, which led his father whose circumstances were somewhat straitened, to consent to his receiving a collegiate education. Accordingly at the age of seventeen he commenced his preparation for college under the instruction of his pastor, the Rev. Joseph

C. Shaw; but as it was only a part of the time that he was able to devote to study, it was nearly three years before he was fitted to enter the Freshman class; and then circumstances occurred which led him to engage in teaching a school in his native place, rather than going immediately to college. His connection with the school continued one year; and meanwhile he was prosecuting the studies of the Freshman class at Cambridge, availing himself of occasional assistance from the Rev. Henry Ware, (afterwards Professor) then of Hingham. It was a rule from which he never departed, to pass over nothing in his studies which he did not fully understand; and to this habit thus early formed, I have heard him say that he attributed much of his success in life.

He became a member of the Sophomore class of Harvard College in the autumn of 1797—a few months after he had reached the age of twenty one. As he was in a great measure dependant for his education upon his own efforts, he taught a school during two of the winters that he was in college, and attempted it the third, but was prevented by

a serious illness. Notwithstanding these interruptions, however, he maintained uniformly an excellent standing in his class; as was sufficiently indicated by the fact that he graduated with the highest honour—a distinction, I cannot forbear to say, the more marked, from his having been a classmate of the gifted, accomplished and eloquent Buckminster; not to speak of some others who still survive, bearing the highest professional honours.

Immediately after his graduation, he became assistant teacher at Phillips Academy, Andover, and at the same time commenced his immediate preparation for the ministry under the Rev. Jonathan French. He held his place as teacher for one year; and after he resigned it, remained at Andover, prosecuting his theological studies, nearly another. He was licensed to preach by the Andover Association in April, 1802. Shortly after, he accepted an invitation to preach at Dedham, the result of which was that he was ordained and installed there on the 16th of March, 1803.

Here he continued labouring to great acceptance, and enjoying in a high degree the

respect and confidence of his people, fifteen years. There were many circumstances which rendered this a pleasant settlement to him; not the least of which was that it brought him into intimate relations with that illustrious man, Fisher Ames, who was, at that time, an active member of his parish. He evidently succeeded in gaining both the ear and the heart of the great statesman; their intercourse was frequent and affectionate; Dr. Bates' reminiscences of his friend were equally abundant and delightful; and for several years preceding his death, he was probably the best living witness to Ames' personal habits and intellectual and moral qualities. It is earnestly to be hoped that he has left some record of his observations upon that eminent man, of which posterity may have the benefit.

Dr. Bates resigned his charge at Dedham with a view to accept an appointment as President of Middlebury College. His induction to this office took place in March, 1818. Here he continued discharging his duties with great ability and fidelity until September, 1839. Not only was his devotion to the interests of the college unwearied,—not only

did he exert himself to the utmost to elevate the standard of liberal education, and to make thorough scholars of all who came under his care, but the influence of his high personal character in the community at large, was favourable to the prosperity of the institution. His instructions—I say it upon the authority of some of his distinguished pupils,—were specially prized in the departments of intellectual and moral philosophy, where his clear and vigorous perceptions, and his power of rigid analysis, found their appropriate exercise.

It was Dr. Bates' determination, when he accepted the Presidency of the college, not to retain it beyond the age of sixty—circumstances occurred, however, to induce him to remain a few years longer; and other circumstances subsequently occurred that led him to hasten his resignation. He retired from the office at the age of sixty-four. Immediately after leaving Middlebury, he set out to visit his daughters who resided in South Carolina; and on stopping at Washington a few days, he was, through the influence of his friends, Silas Wright and Judge Prentiss of Vermont, then United States' Senators, chosen

Chaplain to Congress. This detained him at Washington till the close of the session, and gave him an opportunity of gratifying his intellectual tastes in various ways, particularly in making the acquaintance of many of the most eminent men of the day. As soon as he was at liberty, he proceeded to South Carolina, where he enjoyed a delightful, though brief visit with his daughters, and the excellent friends among whom he found them. On returning to the North, he preached first for two months at Portland; and afterwards for two years, as a stated supply, at Northborough. On the 22d of March, 1843, just forty years from the time of his ordination at Dedham, he was installed pastor of this church.

During nearly the whole time since his settlement among you, his firm and elastic step, the vigorous workings of his mind, and his ability to labour in season and out of season with all the energy of middle life, have scarcely allowed you to realize that he was becoming an old man. In the summer of 1852, he experienced, for a short time, some abatement of his physical vigour, in connection with a shock that was supposed to be of the

nature of paralysis; but he gradually recovered from the effect of this; and when I saw him a few weeks after, I could scarcely perceive that any change had come over him. In October of the last year, he travelled as far West as Ohio, partly to visit his children, and partly to attend the meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for foreign missions; and after an absence of about a month, he came home highly gratified by his journey and visit. I had the pleasure of seeing him a short time on his return, and as I noticed the vigour of his mind and body, and listened to his animated conversation, I could not but think that, in all probability, several years more of honourable activity would be added to his life. But amidst all those hopeful indications of continued health, death was lurking; and he finally came in a way of which he had given no premonition. Our venerable friend was arrested suddenly, and in his full strength, by one of the most terrible forms of disease; he endured it with Christian composure and fortitude, with his eye fixed upon Heaven, and his heart at rest upon his Redeemer's merits; and when the appointed time came,

he walked fearlessly through the dark valley, his spirit evidently ready for its flight to immortality.

In attempting an outline of Dr. Bates' character, such as the occasion demands, I am aware that I must labour under the double disadvantage of speaking *of* one with whom I have had only occasional intercourse, and *to* those who have known him long and well, both as a neighbour and a pastor. It is indeed more than thirty years since my acquaintance with him commenced; and during this whole period, I think I may say I have enjoyed the privilege and honour of his friendship; but in later years our relations have grown more familiar, and since his residence in this place, I have been several times attracted hither, not more from a feeling of veneration for his character, than from a desire to profit by his wisdom. I will state as faithfully as I can the impressions I have received in respect to him, happy in the reflection that if they are in any respect wrong, I speak in the presence of those whose superior knowledge of him will instantly suggest the appropriate correction.

In looking at Dr. Bates' character in the general, what first strikes me is its remarkable symmetry and completeness. There was no such singular preponderance of any one faculty *above* the rest, and no such marked inferiority of any one faculty *to* the rest, as to occasion a want of harmony in the general impression. You felt that the various qualities that made up the man,—intellectual, moral and religious, were all well balanced. He had no meteor-like eccentricities to astonish or bewilder. He recognized order as Heaven's first law; and to this law the movements of his mind all seemed to conform. You could hardly say for what he was most distinguished, or for what he was least distinguished; but you could say with confidence that he was distinguished for doing everything well.

If I am right in my estimate of Dr. Bates' intellectual character, his mind was uncommonly clear, acute and vigorous. It never seemed to me, however, that his mental operarations were so much distinguished for rapidity as for safety and certainty—whatever subject of inquiry presented itself to him, he

was accustomed to hold to his mind under its various aspects, and to form his judgment from an accurate survey of everything pertaining to it. While he had a taste for abstract investigation, and pushed his inquiries into the reasons of things as far as was consistent with Christian humility and reverence, he paused in the true spirit of a Christian philosopher, at the legitimate boundary of human knowledge; never attempting to be wise above what God has written either in the constitution of nature or providence or in the volume of Revelation. And when a great subject had got thorough possession of his mind, he held it with a vigorous grasp; and was able to throw it into the light of powerful argument and ample illustration. He had a keen insight into the characters of men, as well as into the relations of things; and I think he rarely mistook in his appreciation of an individual, even upon a slight acquaintance. He possessed, in a high degree, that sterling quality,—common sense—he seemed to know intuitively what was fitting to all conditions and all circumstances; and he rarely took a step that he had occasion to regret, or that

did not commend itself to the enlightened judgment of good men.

Dr. Bates' moral qualities were, in no degree, inferior to his intellectual. He possessed great kindliness and generosity of spirit, and seemed to delight in conferring favours, whenever it was in his power. He had uncommon strength of purpose—a perseverance that scarcely reckoned any obstacle too great to be overcome. He had an unbending integrity, never swerving from his honest convictions, no matter what might be the temptation. At the same time, he scrupulously avoided giving needless offence; he was uniformly discreet and conciliatory in his intercourse, and was always slow to impute bad motives where good ones might be supposed. He was characteristically modest—more inclined to manifest deference toward others than to claim it for himself. I know not what his temper may have originally been, though I should suppose, from his general strength of character, that it might have been intense, if not impetuous; but if so, he must, I think, have disciplined it into entire subjection; for I never detected in him the semblance of

irritability. In his social intercourse, he was attentive to all the proprieties of life. He was perfectly accessible to all classes; and knew how to become the delightful companion even of little children. He was sometimes humorous and playful, often eminently instructive, always agreeable. His manners were a fine compound of simplicity, urbanity and dignity.

His Christian character no doubt received its complexion, in a great measure, from his general temperament and habit of mind. In his views of divine truth, there was no tendency to extremes; his system of theology, like his mind, was well balanced; and I judge from what he has told me, that he would as soon have taken President Dwight as an exponent of the mind of the Spirit, as any uninspired writer. His Christian feelings and conduct were evidently in harmony with his convictions. He was earnest without being enthusiastic, serious without being austere, catholic without compromising his views of divine truth. His religion combined principle, feeling and practice—it was the truth acting upon the intellect, the conscience, the heart and the life.

As a preacher, Dr. Bates would always find favour with the serious and intelligent of any community. He might not pass with the superficial multitude for a highly eloquent preacher, but all who penetrate beneath the surface would pronounce him a highly instructive one. He spoke from the amplest intellectual resources, and what he said was the result of mature and often deeply elaborated thought. So thoroughly was his mind trained to orderly and logical processes, that it was impossible for him to write or speak at random; and hence you could detect method even in his least studied efforts. His style showed an exact taste, being distinguished less for ornament, than correctness and classical purity. His illustrations were always appropriate, and sometimes uncommonly forcible. His preaching, as represented by his published sermons, was little of a controversial character; though it was decidedly of an evangelical tone, and never faltered in its statements of any thing that he believed to be Christian truth. He preached the doctrines of the gospel, not as mere speculations, but as the vital elements of our eternal well

being. He contemplated man in all his various relations, and endeavoured to pour the light of truth upon his understanding and conscience, in reference to each. His manner in the pulpit was without much passion or gesture, and yet it was natural, dignified and impressive. It is only a few times that I have had the privilege of listening to him; but I never heard him when I was not greatly interested and edified by his performance.

Dr. Bates was fitted to exert a controlling influence on great occasions; especially in deliberative assemblies, and amidst scenes of public or private conflict. It is well known that in the early part of his ministry, he was employed as counsel in one of the most perplexed and memorable cases of church controversy to be found in the history of this Commonwealth;* and if a pretty uniform tradition is to be relied on, he acquitted himself with a reputation for honourable fairness and high ability, which has rarely been awarded to any of his brethren in similar circumstances. His great wisdom, his ready discernment of what is required by a sudden exigency, his ability

* The case of the Rev. (afterwards Dr.) John Codman, of Dorchester.

to command his thoughts and feelings and give effective utterance to both, and his well sustained and uniform urbanity, might have rendered him eminent either as a lawyer or a statesman.

If it were proper, I might speak of him in his more private relations—I might tell you what you know far better than I do—how his presence was the light and joy of his dwelling; how gracefully and tenderly he sustained the conjugal relation; how his numerous children, employed as they are, in different walks of public usefulness, are the living epistle, testifying every where to his excellent parental character. And I might speak of him too as a friend, drawing only upon my own experience of his friendship, and feel sure of not saying a word to which you would not render a hearty assent. But much of what might be said on these points, I prefer to pass over in reverential silence. I say again, you knew him better than I did; and were it not that my duty seemed to call me to render this testimony concerning him in your hearing, I would greatly have preferred to sit down and listen to you, while you should have

opened to me the treasury of your own warm and cherished recollections.

Pause now for a moment, and say whether the results of such a life as we have been contemplating, do not bear the impress of true moral sublimity. For nearly thirty years this departed servant of God was constantly engaged in the active duties of the ministry, and he always proved himself a workman that needs not to be ashamed. About twenty-four years he devoted to the immediate instruction of youth ; and more than twenty-one he spent at the head of a great literary institution. And, during the whole of his professional course, he has been, in the highest sense, a public man. Not only have his services as a minister been put in requisition on many extraordinary occasions, but in all great matters of public interest, of however general a nature, he has been found a ready and an efficient helper. And now who will undertake to trace out all the streams of benign influence that have proceeded from him during this long period; especially who will even hazard a conjecture as to the

ulterior results of his career, as they shall be developed in the progress of coming ages. Already, we doubt not, his influence is felt in Heaven, in the joy and praise of many a soul that has been conducted thither in the light of his ministrations. And we know that it still operates on earth, through innumerable channels. There are great men scattered all over the land, some of them belonging to the very life guard of our free institutions, whose characters have been moulded, perhaps chiefly, by his instrumentality; so that it is not too much to say that the man who lies there sleeping so peacefully in his coffin, is still speaking through a thousand voices to bless his country and the world. And as that slumber will remain unbroken while the ages pass away, the living man will still be represented on earth by an influence that will act with mighty power in forming the characters and destinies of myriads. Venerable father, though the grave waits to receive thee, we expect that thou will still meet us in the walks of Christian usefulness; we expect that in virtue of what thou hast been and what thou hast

done, thou wilt be a fellow helper unto the kingdom of God with the wise and good of all coming generations.

Blessed are they that mourn the departure of Christian friends; for they shall be comforted. Blessed especially are they who mourn for those who have not only lived and died in the faith of Jesus, but have been hailed as among the lights of their generation; who, possessing great powers and attainments, have devoted them sacredly to the honour of God and the best interests of their fellow men. Blessed are ye, my mourning friends; for in the husband and the father that has been taken from you, you are permitted to contemplate a noble specimen of both God's natural and spiritual workmanship. You find no blemish in his character at which the veneration of his friends needs to halt, or for which there is occasion to invoke the world's charity. At every step of his long career, he has been dispensing good to his fellow men. In his old age, you have seen him bringing forth fruit as fragrant and beautiful as ever. The last words that he spoke to you, were words of love and trust and blessing. And when, finally,

he passed down through those deep shadows, and crossed the line from beyond which no earthly voice comes back, faith seemed to render audible to you the voice of angels, welcoming him to a participation of their immortal joys. Well may it suffice as an antidote even to that deep sorrow which those weeds and tears betoken, to think of the living and triumphant faith, of the beneficent and honoured life, of the immortal crown, and finally of the grave itself as hallowed and guarded by Him who hath proclaimed himself the Resurrection. I commend you to the Comforter and the Sanctifier—may each sorrowful emotion find a correspondent joy, and give increased elevation and purity to your whole spiritual nature.

Brethren in the ministry, I will not dissemble the embarrassment which I feel in bearing so prominent a part in these funeral services, when it would seem so much more fitting that, if I were present at all, it should be only to join silently in the common mourning. It is enough for me to say that, in occupying this place, I am only yielding to a request from our departed friend, which indeed I never

knew how to account for, but which my affectionate respect and veneration for him rendered it impossible for me to decline. But you will allow me to forget, for the time, that I am not one of your own immediate number, and to meet you not more in the fellowship of faith than the fellowship of sorrow; for if he who has gone to his rest was your friend, so he was mine also; and you cannot render so high a testimony to his worth, or express so deeply a sense of the loss which his death has occasioned, but I can honestly and heartily respond to it. What remains then but that we who venerated him while living, should cherish his memory, now that he is gone; that we who have thought it a privilege to walk in the light of his wisdom, should be forward now to learn lessons from his grave; that we who must follow him through the dark valley so soon, should be quickened by his departure to gird ourselves for our own. May that spirit of prudence and peace, of enlightened charity and well directed activity, of which he was so bright an example, be diffused through all your borders; and thus may this favoured region in which your lot

is cast, take on a still brighter and more luxuriant spiritual hue, producing innumerable plants of righteousness, to flourish hereafter in the Paradise above.

Next to those who mourn the death of a near relative, this church and Christian society must share most deeply the sorrows of this occasion. It is honourable to you as a people that you should have spread out your arms to receive this venerable man as your pastor, when he had already numbered so many years of active usefulness, and at a period when the almond tree has usually begun to flourish. The event has proved the wisdom of your choice; for you have thereby secured to yourselves, for nearly eleven years, the labours of one of the most eminent ministers in New England; and during this whole time, his force of intellect, his warmth of affection, his firmness of purpose, and perhaps I may say his energy of action, have remained unabated. Nay I am assured that his last labours were among his most earnest and effective; and that the greatly increased diligence and activity which he manifested, were recognized by some of his friends as a token that his work was nearly

done. And more than that—I understand that the windows of Heaven seemed to be opening for the pouring forth of a blessing upon you, just as the gates of Heaven were opening to allow him to pass to the reward of his labours. We trust that the blessing will not be withheld; and that his death as well as his life may be hailed as marking a bright epoch in the history of this church.

It is fitting, my friends, that you should mourn for your beloved pastor; but, let me say, your mourning will be to little purpose, unless it include a devout recognition of God's providence in his removal; a grateful sense of his goodness in continuing him to you so long; a solemn recollection of the instructions, counsels and prayers you have received from his lips; and an earnest desire, an abiding resolution, to establish permanently upon yourselves and your children the benefits of his ministry. Let me commend to your frequent and careful perusal the excellent discourse delivered on the tenth anniversary of his ministry among you, which has lately, I doubt not, found a place in most of your dwellings. Here you have your own history

as a people, with the instruction it suggests, faithfully exhibited by his pen. Here you have the teachings of his wisdom, after his wisdom had been matured by the observation and experience of a long life. Here you have the warm breathings of a spirit that knew no higher joy than that of seeing you walk in the truth. Here you have his last utterances through the press—they were worthy to be his last; and had he known they were to be such, I cannot see how he could have rendered them more appropriate or impressive. I say then, preserve the remembrance of all his evangelical labours, so far as you can; especially keep sacred this last legacy, and let it not be your fault, if it does not descend to bless your children's children.

I cannot close this discourse without reminding you of the relations which this occasion sustains, not only to the past, but to the future; without directing your thoughts backward to the ministry that has now come to a close, and forward to the dread tribunal at which you must render an account of it. The prophet, the prudent, the ancient, has been among you—have his labours helped

to form your characters for Heaven? Have the truths which he has dispensed been welcomed by you in their sanctifying and quickening power? Have you honoured him as God's messenger, and encouraged him to be faithful by the alacrity with which you have received his ministrations? If so, then ye may well afford to rejoice in the review of his ministry,—to rejoice in the anticipation of its results. But have ye, on the other hand, treated with contempt the message he has brought to you, and beat back the sword of the Spirit, when he has aimed it at your conscience and heart? Have you listened without emotion to his earnest pleadings for your salvation? Have you kept your eye and your heart still fixed on the earth, when he has been doing his utmost to bring you within the influence of the powers of the world to come? Have you sent him away to his closet to cry out in the bitterness of his spirit—"Who hath believed our report?" Are any of you examples this day of the hardening influence of abused privileges? Are there some among you even of silvered locks and tottering footsteps, whose spirits have received no upward tendency,

but are drawn by a fearful attraction towards the world below? I warn you, every one, that though you may seem to have done with this ministry, you will hear from it again—you will be obliged to face it, with all its array of precious privileges and solemn and hallowed associations, another day. Will ye not then heed the message of warning that comes from your pastor's coffin, though ye have so perseveringly refused to listen to that which came from his lips. If not, then believe me, as there is truth in God, the grave of that prophet, that prudent, that ancient, however far away,* shall be a witness against you; and hereafter its tenant shall awake to render a still more decisive and appalling testimony. God grant that when that voice, now hushed in death, shall break upon your ear again, it may be not to justify the sentence of your condemnation, but to hail you as fellow heirs to the glories of immortality.

* His remains were taken for burial to Middlebury, Vermont.